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STAR GAZING

METRICAL COMPOSITIONS

Alexandré James MacDonald

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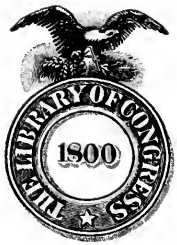

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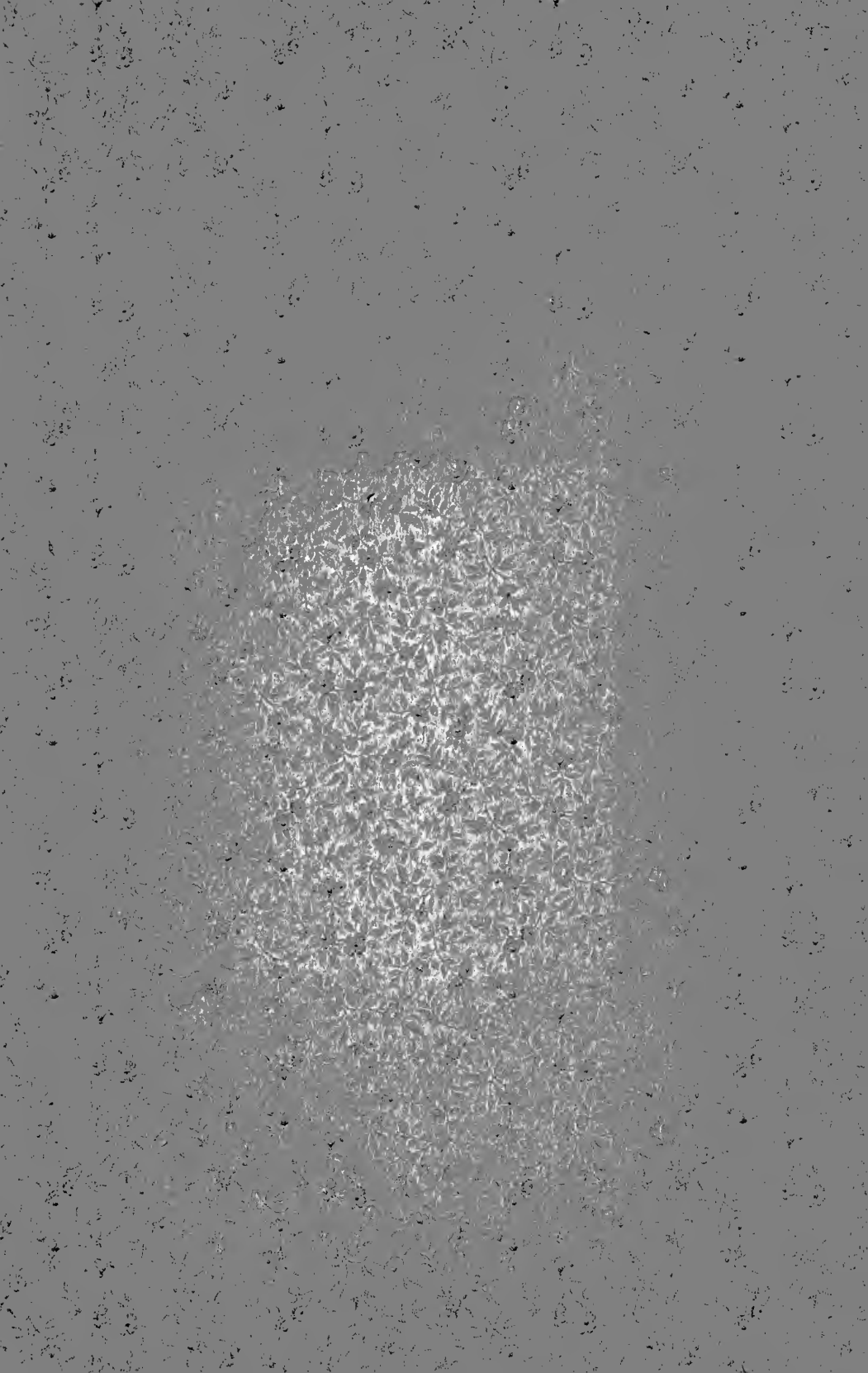

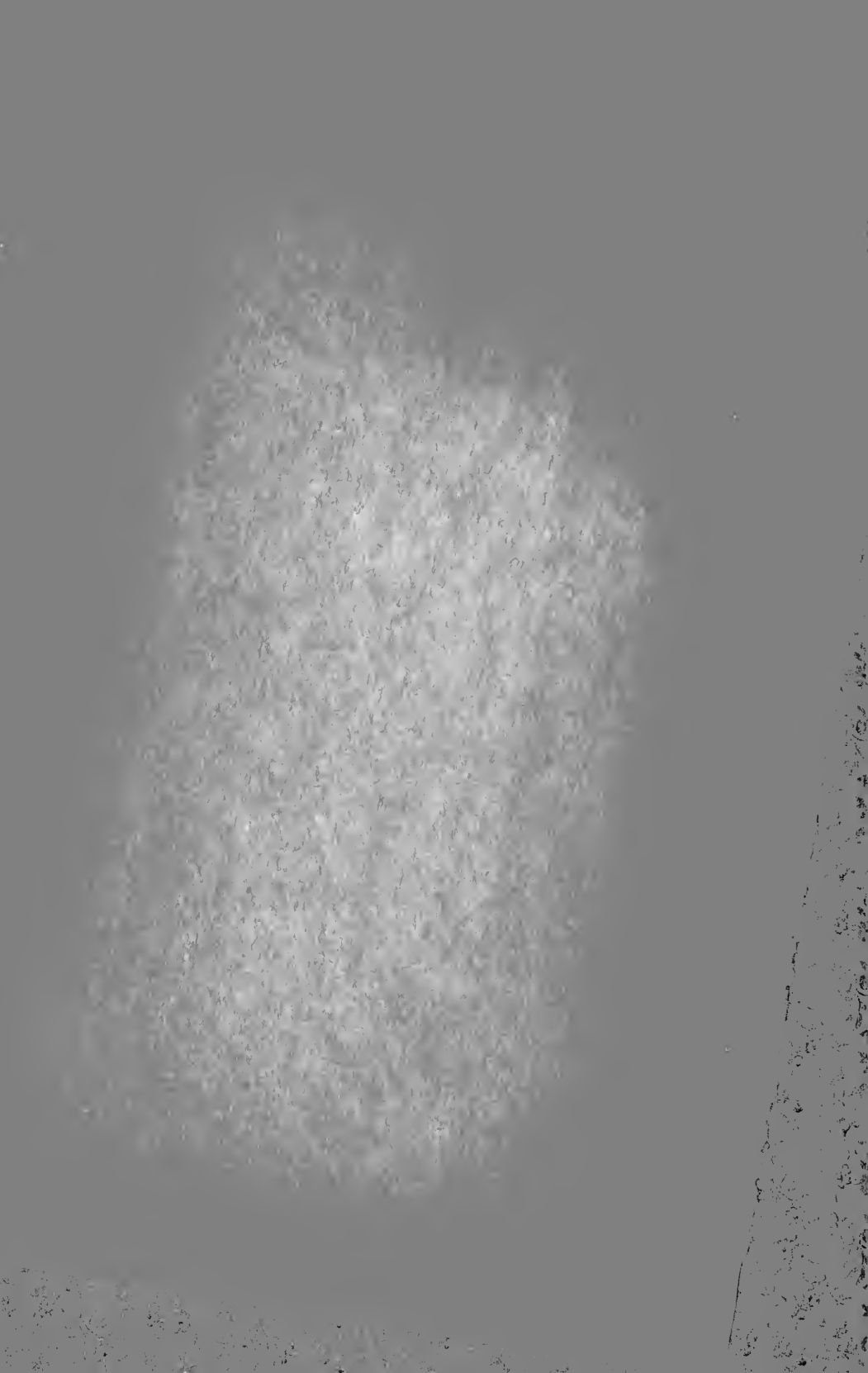

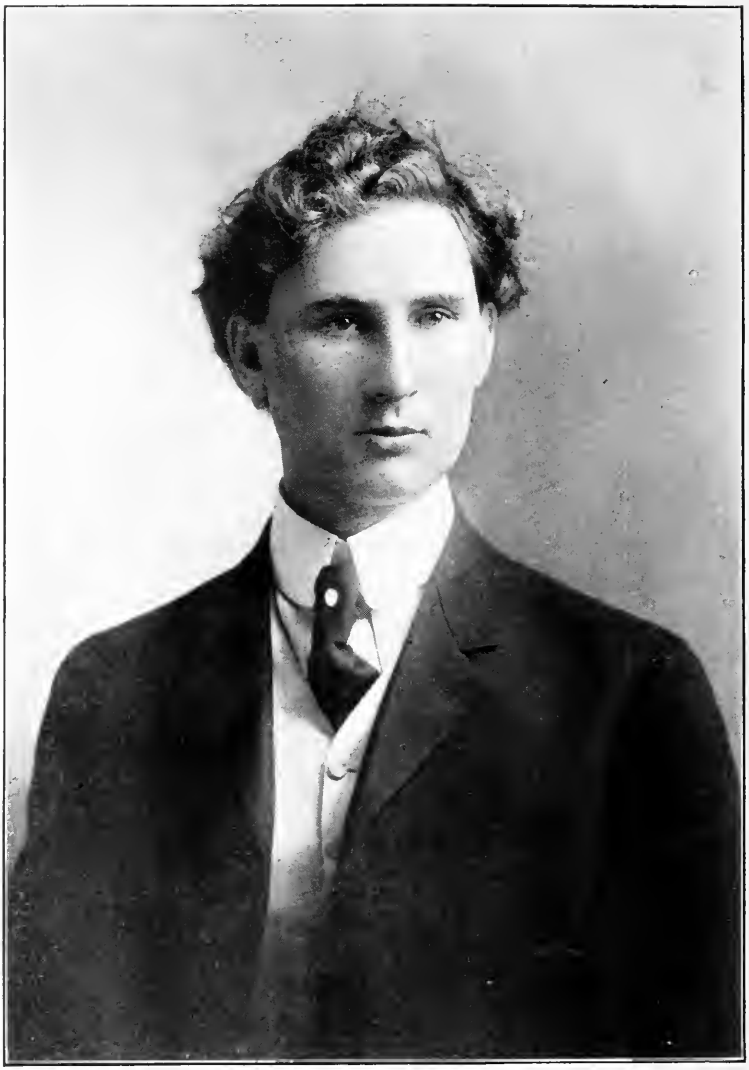

ALEXANDRÉ JAMES MACDONALD.

STAR GAZING

METRICAL
COMPOSITIONS

BY

ALEXANDRÉ JAMES MacDONALD

OF BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS.

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1907

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CONTENTS.

PAGE

Dedication 5
Preface 6
Prelude 9
Time and After Time 9
Song to Mary 15
Long Time Ago 15
London 16
Modern Chivalry 16
To Leo the XIII 17
The Heavenly Visitant.
Prelude 1 21
Prelude 2 21
The Heavenly Visitant 21
Prelude 27
The Graveyard Winds 27
Methinks It Was a Vision Pass'd Me By 29
Sonnet to Helen 30
Margarite 30
To Swinburne. 31
Byron 32
Chatterton 33
Keats 33
Poe 34
To the Spirit of Chopin 34
Impromptu to Burns 35
Shelley 35
Star Gazing.
Poems to Thais.
Prelude 35
I Saw Thee Glancing 36
To Thais 37
To Thais 38
When Days and Weeks and Months and Years Have Pass'd . 39
To Thais 40
Thinking of Thais 40
Thine Eyes Glanced Hate 41
To Thais 42
To Thais 43
Song to Thais 43
To Thais 44
To the Spirit of the Day 44
Their Sun Hath Set 47
To an Indian Girl 48
The Three Tides 49

There's Hatred in My Heart 50
We Backward Look 51
The Outbound Ship 51
To Michael Ambrose MacNiel 52
Star Gazing.
In Joyful Realms 52
Yonder 53
When Darkness Comes 55
? 55
That Darksome River 55
In After Time 56
That Darkness Waits Us 57
In Days of Brightness 58
In Coming Time 58
Ode to Two Years 59
When Comes Decay 61
TRANSLATIONS.
Biographical Notes:
Mr. William Shumsky 62
Mr. Price Cottle 62
A Dream (From the Hebrew) 62
Sonnet to Esther (From the Hebrew 63
Song to Rosena (From the Hebrew of William Shumsky) . . 63
Sweet Maiden of the Brown Eye (From the Hebrew) . . . 64
Sonnet (From the Esperanto of Price Cottle). Suspicion . . 65
Sonnet (From the Esperanto of Price Cottle). The Reconciliation, 65
On Vacation
Prelude, Over Yonder 66
To Dr. Maurice E. Paine-FitzGerald 66
To Dr. Edward A. Tracey 70
Departed Days 76
A River Dream 77
Winter 77
When Comes Regret 78
To Mary 79

DEDICATION.

This is the age of the interpretive artist. Creative talent seems to be in abeyance, and it is in accordance with the eternal fitness of things that there should be a temporary lull in original effort; humanity is too busy just now assimilating what it already possesses in art to need new stimulant. It is the age, par excellence, of the interpreter. The interpretation of the works of the great music masters, and especially pianoforte music, brings out a score of new names annually. Chopin, the most ethereal and elusive of all the masters, is appreciated now, thanks to De Pachmann, Gabrilowitsch and others as he never before was appreciated. In the domain of the drama we have a parallel state of art. Fifty years ago where there was one able actor we have now at least a score, and the spirit of Shakespeare is no doubt well satisfied for the way his extraordinary legacies are being so universally unfolded in the beginning of this the twentieth century. With what a torrent of Shakespearean eloquence has Boston been flooded during the season just closing! Mantell, Mansfield, Viola Allen, Noveli, Sothern, Marlowe, Bernhardt, and last and youngest, but by no means least, Thais Lawton. I will venture to predict that this young woman, if she chooses to continue in the art she so finely illustrates, will occupy as high a plane of dramatic excellence as any of the above named eminent artists, if not higher. It is seldom such genius, such personal beauty, such winning personality are united in one individual. In sincere admiration of Miss Lawton's vivid portrayal of many phases of human nature, and particularly Shakespearean charactery, I dedicate to her this unworthy volume of verses.

Boston, April 4, 1907. A. J. M.

PREFACE.

The contents of this volume were composed for the amusement and pastime of one person—myself. I publish the book for the satisfaction of one person—myself. I am entirely indifferent as to whether this publication will meet public approval or any kind of notice whatsoever. A people that keeps buildogs and pugilists in luxurious affluence and has on its national escutcheon the blot of having let its supreme poet die in want and disgrace is not a people to appeal to in a poetical way.

I shall have but a limited number of copies published and will make the price of each book almost prohibitive. Should any person be so foolish as to desire a copy I will send one—upon receipt of price!

Poetry, to be poetry, must possess one or all of the following attributes:

Music
Imagery
Mystery
Spirituality
Passion

The first three qualities are exemplified to a marvelous degree by the poems of the poet alluded to above—the unfortunate Edgar Allen Poe. The next, spirituality, is to be found, or rather, it is to be felt, in the writings of the late French poet, Paul Verlaine; and passion in the powerful works of Byron and Sappho.

Therefore in view of these facts I would never think of assuming authorship, with the endless vexatious troubles connected therewith, were I not confident my writings possess one or more of the above poetical qualifications. I will go farther: Even if absolutely convinced my compositions embody all the essentials of poetry I would not bother with having them in book

form did I not feel, however erroneously, that they contain one other important requisite, originality; the which did I believe myself lacking I would never publish a line, no matter how spiritual, musical, mystical, imaginative and passionate my poetry might prove to be.

It would be an easy matter to smear my pages over with Greek, Latin, or Sanscrit, in the manner of Swinburne and others; but I think one original thought rightly expressed is worth more than a volume of erudite display.

A. J. MacDonald,

37 West Newton Street.

Boston, Mass., April 3, 1907.

PRELUDE.

I would not die and leave no trace behind,
No evergreen memorial of my mind,
No offspring of my heart where thousands be,
Unform'd, yet felt, a heaving progeny—
Some thought that when I perish may survive,
And like the livid lightning, be alive!
To leap, even as the instant currents dart
From cloud to cloud, and light the burden'd heart;
That I may not, as billions gone before,
Be blotted from all memory evermore.

TIME AND AFTER TIME.

Thou comest, Autumn, with the wind and rain
  And driven leaf, and disappearing wing,
And once again I witness thy domain
Of desolation, and the unheeded slain
  Of myriad life; the signless suffering

Of hiveless swarms; thou bringest biting dooms
  To frail wing'd waifs: they had their shiny day!
They flitted thro' the pleasant gleams and glooms
Of aspen aisles: and lonesome later blooms
  In vermeil prime must speedily decay.

Thou comest once again and I am here,
  A time-toss'd leaf, unbough'd by any wind
Branch-clinging still, a solitary, sere,
Tenacious mourner, weathering the year;
  And many a comrade have I seen consign'd

To silent clay, and many a hopeful eye
  Wax dim and dying; many a gentle breast
Breathe "faint farewells" to sobbing mourners by,
Wax conscious of its dissolution nigh,
  Wax wan and still: and beings newly blest

With sweet prospective, unanimity—
  Lost in each other, each the essential one,
Such one that time nor yet eternity
Hath paralleled, as part the branch and tree
  By blasting bolt, I've seen one chilled, undone,

The other hurried to the darksome tomb;—
  How fortunate the wild, insentient being
Unboding in the pathless forest gloom,
That sees no shadow ere its season loom,
  That dies one death, nor dissolution fleeing.

But hapless man! not only doomed to die,
  But doomed to live anticipating doom;
That shadow, never absent from thine eye,
Makes pleasure as the perfume passing by
  On stayless winds: or as thy fleeting bloom,

Desolate season. Season of vermeil mourning,
  Of dawn-like distances, of glorious glens,
Of plumed pilgrims, taking timely warning,
Departing swiftly, all thy splendor scorning,
  Of brightening woods, whose sapient denizens

Conceive too well thy passing pageantry,
  Thy brief magnificence, thy dangerous days,
And trust them not, but questing ceaselessly,
Survive instinctless multitudes, that see
  No hour beyond, until their little blaze

Of life dims into darkness evermore.
  So human myriads, countless as thy leaves,
Fade from the earth, like foam-globes from the shore,
That briefly laugh and weep and all is o'er
  Save the mute memory that the stone receives,

And utterless anguish poignantly resigned
  O'er the unanswering comrade who will never

Speak once again, save in thy wailing wind,
Season of mournful utterance. Moaning mind
Take solace in the thought that not forever

Must drag thy course of uncompanioned years,
Or weep for aye by unresponding tombs;
Thou, too, wilt be the cause of torrent tears,
And in the chamber of besetting fears
Thy fires shall vanish, as thy sodden blooms,

Death contemplating season! sighing hours
Must come to every heart, and bitter rains
Still fall and chill the heart of tenderest flow'rs;
But sadder than thy sigh in barren bowers,
And wilder than thine anthem that refrains

By infant mounds, o'er waiting sepulchres,
The blast of human anguish; bitter strife
Where should be peace and bounty; thin white hairs
And withered frame repulseth; woe is theirs
Found friendless in the autumn of their life;

So myriads: did they never in their prime
Stand in thy faded fields or lightening wood,
And see far-sighted creatures briskly climb,
Or sapient beings burrow in the grime
Foregathering then? If briefly thus they stood

And moments mused, how light would be the years
Which crush them now to unmemorial'd mounds!
Ah, vain regrets! and chief among their fears
Thy merciless successor! But their tears
Will soon be flowless; pulse that feebly bounds

Must soon be stilled; as thy ungarnering lives
Flit aimless hither, thither, sink and perish.
How blithe thy dormouse! thou hast countless hives
Of bodeless beings; and thy squirrel thrives
The biting season thro'; these wisely cherish

Life's once given gift, as knowing when they die
They perish evermore, and while they may
Foregather gladly. Ye so vaunted, high,
Of backward glance and future piercing eye
Which serves ye only in the sated day,

Befriends ye only in the glutted hour;
Ye will not hear the Winter howling drear,
Too chained to sloth, too charmed in pleasure's bower
To heed; and when the senile shadows lower
Bewail ye, and let fall the bitter tear

And helpless sink. And ye of moiling ways,
Of fungus care that grew upon your brow
If but brief moments basked ye in the rays
Which recreate, ye'd have delayed long days,
Nor joyless days, the stone that's lettered now:

Yet vain regrets! how like thy listless leaves,
Most sombre season! fluttering round the dead;
For all the saddening lessons he receives
Man learns too late; his darkening spirit grieves
O'er moments wasted and o'er chances fled,

And perishes thrice pang'd. Thou find'st the bee
Serenely hiv'd; thy woodland creature climbs
From Desolation to its chamber'd tree
Or deeply delveth, and thy songsters flee
From blasts that know no ruth to aryan climes,

To snowless shores. High mortal! were it not
Thy destiny (beast, bird, are yet the same
From Autumns immemorial, and the grot,
The hollow trunk their unrepining lot)
Thou mightest thus be happy, but the flame

Which lights thy being ever drives thee on
In restless aspirations; ages hence

Unfleeing pleasure or oblivion
Shall be thy portion; countless days must dawn
And empires of unknown magnificence

Shall sink ere then; and future forests vast
And spaceless plains of cities centuries seated,
Be swept to deserts. Autumn, thou that hast
Seen man's commencement, shalt behold him cast
Into oblivion? as thy leaves are treated

So thus humanity! Unnumbered tombs
With all their unavailing memories,
Be reared and razed; the shaft that proudly looms
The humblest stone decay as scattered blooms
And fanes that fearful consciences appease

And institutes greed-granted to allay
The rising wrath, and palisades and towers
Safeguarding mammon'd despots 'til their day
Of dark departure, these shall pass away,
Must vanish, Autumn, as thy final flowers

And pathway leaves; thy broad unmantled moon,
Silvering cemeteries, shall behold
In after Autumns not one lettered stone
She glamors now, sad goal of many a moan
And tear, vain as thy flow'rets that unfold

On frosted winds. Thy insects chill and die,
Thy flow'rets fade; thy wild winds hither thither
The restless leaves, thy silent clouds roll by,
And mankind marches—to what destiny?
And far creations roll, O Autumn, whither

In fearful sweeping? Yon ethereal sea,
Bright islanded, which was ere time began—
There blighted planets sink, vast mystery,
But mankind marches to eternity,
All else to chaos: massy star and sun

Forever vanish. Mortal! sigh no more
Nor deem of lasting darkness; far away,
Far over space, beyond remotest lore,
And fancied suns, there lies a sheltered shore,
A smiling beach, and everlasting day:

Where severed hearts and waiting ones have met;
Where every moment hath a raptured meeting;
Ah, sigh no more, nor let thine eyes be wet,
There troubled asking, never stilled regret
Subside and vanish, as thy silent fleeting,

Utterless Autumn! Seasons come and go,
And vernal voices warble wild and sweet;
Mild Summer comes and richer blossoms blow,
Autumnal winds come sighing soft and low,
And mankind hasten to their blest retreat,

Thro' every season. Climes of the unsighing,
Of gliding dreams of sylphs of snowy wing:
Far over space, all mortal thought outlying—
Why starry yearning, why the inward crying
For far felicity? The wild birds sing

A rapturous monody and die forever;
The rivers babble; Ocean's bitter leaven
Imparts its pean to the sounds which never
Subside on earth, rejoicing on forever,
But mankind weep, inheritors of heaven!

Transcendent destiny! Lament no more,
Nor peer at darkness with thine eyelids steeping;
That fervent yearning every mortal bore;
That far inclining, from thy spirit's core,
Should waken thee from out thy secret weeping.

What means thy sadness evil paths pursuing?
The sharp remorse why hold in secret dread?

What means thy starry asking, planet viewing?
Why sentient life, and death, and sensate doing,
And wherefore deathless clinging to the dead?

Transcendant destiny! Undying being,
Why ever mournful? give to wistful dreaming,
Upturn to silent planets, swiftly fleeing,
And look beyond thine utmost aided seeing,
To everlasting birthrights brightly beaming.

SONG TO MARY.

We must go our various ways,
We that were as one,
Live and die divided days,
Our delusion done.

Should we pass each other by
Show that we forget,
And save the sigh,—and save the sigh,—
As we had never met.

Let us hasten! let us linger
Not all ties to sever,
Hide that sign upon thy finger!
We will part forever.

LONG TIME AGO.

How long since I inhaled this balmy air,
How long since I have heard thy rushy flow
Remember'd river! I was happy here
Long time ago.

How oft upon thy banks I sat and listen'd
To the sweet, mystic cadence of thy flow,
Thou art the same, and as thy waters glisten'd
Long time ago!

My many comrades in those happy hours
With whom I stray'd, unfetter'd as thy flow,
Who drank of thee and cull'd thy islet flow'rs
Long time ago,

Where are they now? as leaves that waft away
We know not where, and some I would not know,
And some were as the flow'rets of a day
Long time ago!

Thou art the same, but I am worn and weary;
How comradeless, and spiritless, and slow
From he who splasht thy waters, bright and cheery,
Long time ago!

LONDON.

I visited a city far away
Across the sea toward the rising sun,
The home of pride and grandeur and decay
And bloody footed misery, and display
Of vaunted spoils from feeblest nations won.

London, Eng, August 1, 1905.

MODERN CHIVALRY.

Respectfully dedicated to President Roosevelt and Governor Bell, of Vermont.

The day of chivalry is done,
Lamented Burke; and past and gone
The spirit of the Word of One
"Love one another!"
For Justice now would have the son
Behead his mother!

Even he who stands, in brave relief,
The nation's evanescent chief,

This gallant man! whom rumor hath
  So finely human,
Sent to her bitter, shameful death
  A poor old woman.

Our little Roosevelts, petty Bells,
Inexorably set—which tells
The meagre soul (such strength is hell's
  In very truth)
With whom no impulse e'er impels
  To heavenly ruth.

The day of chivalry is gone,
The day of mercy is to dawn:
And hapless woman, you must shun
  Your father, brother:
For Justice now will have the son
  Behead his mother!

July 4, 1905.

TO LEO THE XIII.

1.

Oh thou that like the last autumnal leaf
  Beholdeth all thy youth's companions lie
Low in the loam—it is with awe and grief
  I contemplate thee, passing grandly by,
  So lofty and commanding, doom'd to die:
What thought supreme from wisdom-giving years
  So numberful as thine, lives in thine eye?
What grand assurance now this vale of tears
Sinks from thee that thy soul will speed to other spheres?

2.

Great mortal, speak! as brother unto brother,
  Forego thy grandeur and my humble lot,

And one brief moment let us deem each other
As death-doom'd beings, mother earth begot;
Methinks there is no darker, wilder thought,
That mind must vanish—like the rainbow's beams—
That consciousness must melt to utter naught,
And soothing fancies be but foster'd dreams
Which fade from deepening thought like childhood's
fairy themes.

3.

Ah, what are we? perchance beneath some sea
Lockt in some shell, within its inmate's maw,
Ambitious atoms; immortality
Instinctive seems, as life's initial law,
Self preservation; mayhap planets draw
Our vision upward, dowering us with yearning
For griefless climes, and filled with joy and awe
We contemplate yon starland scenes, discerning
In every radiant orb a happy beacon burning.

4.

Perchance we are dream-phantoms in the mind
Of some still unawakened god, that when
He rouseth him at matintide, mankind
Will vanish like the morn-fog from the fen;
And peradventure we are microbe-men
In raindrop speeding to some central sphere
To germinate to monsters; or, again,
Be re-resolved to vapor year to year,
Century to century—perhaps trickle in a tear.

5.

Yet, yet, is Hope! that like a desert flow'r
Enchants the waste, sole comforter from heaven,
That comest ever in the sombre hour,
Sublimest blessing unto mortals given;
When hearts are numb'd with fear, and horror-riven,

The soul shrinks back from all-engulfing night
  Then hoverest thou! e'en Death himself is driven
Back to his charnal cavern in affright
At one so starry-fair—unseen of mortal sight.

6.

Like a beholder from a lofty height
  Surveying armies passing swiftly by,
Not one returning ever from the fight,
  Which none may flee from and where all must die,
Thus gazeth thou, and moisten'd is thine eye,
Surviving comrades, kith and kin pass'd on,
  No youth-made friend, no boon companion nigh
To whisper solace: every soul is gone
Whose comradeship made sweet thy life's resplendent
    dawn.

7.

Companion of the shrouded century
  It saw with thee unnumber'd human swarms
Come and depart; time and eternity
  Contend for thee, grandest of living forms.
  Yon utmost climes await thee, angel arms
Will bear thee, rapture-laden, to the blest;
  And heaven will joy that henceforth from the storms
And troub'lous tides of time thou shalt have rest,
Tho' earth will sorely grieve to be thus dispossess'd.

8.

Is there a mortal hopeless and resign'd
  To no hereafter home? Futurity!
What thought stupendous hast thou unconfin'd
  From human hearts! and yearning harmony,
  And vistas dreadful, secret rhapsody,
And golden realms whose gateway is the tomb;
  And be it fable, be it fantasy,

More blest is faith than doubter's dismal gloom
Who shuns all blissful beams and hugs oblivion doom.

9.

And is humanity's long dream dispelling,
  And heaven become a mute or blushful theme?
None have return'd! the rumor of a dwelling
  Beyond yon realms remotest planets' gleam
  Is unconfirm'd; yet never can I deem,
I never can conclude, that man is cast
  In with the things that perish like a dream;
And thou art wholly steadfast to the last,
Thou of the subtle soul and understanding vast!

10.

From mortal multitudes thou dost survive
  Immortal; lo! Death pauses, ill at ease,
Half deeming it is vain with thee to strive,
  Surviving epochs, empires, dynasties;
  Thine heart must be, of far back memories
The pensive home; yet smiling and serene
  And confident as one who, rapturous, sees
Within his grasp things that have ever been
Deep in his ardent soul—eternal laurels green.

11.

This valley mournful, man's ephemeral home,
  For thee no suited habitation; where—
Beyond the realms remotest comets roam,
  Where peopl'd plains ring rapture—it is there!
E'en as a beam which stayeth when the star
  Begetting it did perish long ago,
Thy spirit shall befriend us from afar,
  Misgiving and despondency o'erthrow,
  And put to flight misfaith that hounds us here below.

THE HEAVENLY VISITANT.

Prelude 1.

As from a dream thou wert, and momently
Thou didst remain, dissolving as a dream;
Departing as a wish that cannot be;
And startled by the silence and the gloom
Heavily fallen upon me I awoke,
As from sweet sleep, to find thee but a theme.
As from a dream thou wert, but ah! the tomb
Can tell if thou wast but a fantasy,
The sable casket and the pallid cloak:
As from a dream thou wert, but now thou art
Even as a dream—a silence that's heavy on my heart.

Prelude 2.

She came to me not in her usual bloom,
  White-rob'd, a spectral aspect, and her glance
  Of lustrous wildness lum'd a countenance
Death-hu'd, as from the tomb.

I shudder'd, fearing; in the silent gloom
  I saw her well, her stealthiness of glance,
  Her ashy, smileless lips, her countenance
Not in its wonted bloom.

THE HEAVENLY VISITANT.

Dedicated to the Memory of Florence Warner.
Born 1881—died 1903.

Bright being! thy spirit was ever to me
  As waters to travelers worn,
A river refreshing, a shady tree,
A carolling bird and sweet sleeping, to be
  Arous'd to a beautiful morn.

A rainbow unforming, a spirituelle dream
Sad-haunting the heart thro' the day,
But yet ere the warmth of the midday gleam
Thy spirit, as frail as the infant beam
Of a young star, faded away.

Yet, yet will the poignant hour obtrude,
Tho' my bosom hath long been riven;
With her earth were never a solitude,
Whose absence so wistful, whose presence renew'd
In my heart the repose of heaven.

And I thought—if these arms could but clasp her again,
Embrace her but once, as of yore;
Here, now, where I flee from the troubles of men,
Ah! clasp her once more in this memoried glen—
I'd deem myself blest evermore.

And the night with her voices, so seldom of mirth,
Far murmur'd, with answering sound;
And a leaf between moments fell gently to earth,
As a mortal, however his greatness or worth
Must descend—he must fall to the ground!

And the night breezes cadenc'd a melody
That poets of sound never find;
And methought that a warning was whispered to me,
But I said—'tis a moan from humanity,
Whose sighings replenish the wind.

And I answered the winds, but my song was unheard,
For its sound and its sense were a part
Of a sorrow too sacred for audible word;
And the feather-clad dreamers above were unstirr'd,
For the music remained in my heart:

She dwells with Blight, and Darkness round her keeps
Unceasing vigil; Silence and Decay

Her changeless sentinels, and Dampness steeps
The rayless room where she was laid away.

She dwells with Darkness—when the world is leaping
To ardent beams, and blithe is every bough;
And closer, closer to her heart are creeping
The horrors of the grave; and on her brow
The ebon dews drip from the coffin-lid,
And thro' her lily limbs is stony chill—
Ah, to my soul lost, lost—forever hid
That comrade sweet, irrevocably still.

* * * *

I will not deem thee thus, departed being:
But dream of thee in some undream'd retreat,
Some joyful realm, remote from fancy's seeing,
Thy spirit perfect and thy youth unfleeing
Forever, but thy voice is not more sweet.

I watch the stars and deem of thee again,
And is thy spirit, then, so far away?
Remote from every sense and subtler ken
Evolving now, faint deem'd of living men?
The Sun must die, but thou shalt live for aye!

There was a rumor and it gather'd meaning
From guarded whisper and repining glance;
And I beheld Decline; I saw thee leaning
To pallid languor; dreadful waste was gleaning
The life drops from thy gentle countenance.

Ah vain regrets! and thou hast pass'd away
In vernal prime with loveliness replete;
Thou dwellest now in everlasting day,

With youth unfleeting and thy glance for aye
All lovely, but thy smile is not more sweet.

* * * *

Methought that I would never more behold her,
And I was pale with dread,
And trembl'd lest again I'd ne'er enfold her;
And weeping ones that ever had extoll'd her,
Came, faltering she was dead.

And I perceiv'd, as stepping from a dream,
A phantom form, and near it
Wax'd plainly, as the moon's unclouding gleam;
And that pale thing, pierc'd by a starry beam,
Was likeness to her spirit,—

Came toward me, like a snowy plum-ed bird,
A wing-ed miracle,
Soar'd by me, and my conscious marrow stirr'd!
And from its smileless lips methought I heard
A passionate farewell.

And lo, a silent chamber I discover'd,
Cold to my finger tips,
I knelt me, where the paly moonbeams hover'd,
Pil'd flowers were there, a casket I uncover'd
And kiss'd her ashy lips!

* * * *

I think of the Land of Eternity,
Of the climes of unfading bloom;
Of the shores that lie over the waterless sea,
Where the faces of people like morning be,
And their eyes' starry lemes have a radiancy
Never dimm'd by the thought of the tomb.

Ah, who does not grieve o'er the voicelessness
Of comrades eternally flown?
Companions who never return to confess
Of their wonderful worlds and their happiness;
Eternally silent! repining, we guess
And we gaze, but no token or tone.

I sigh for those climes, and my spirit is fraught
With the scenes o'er the waterless sea,
And the happy wind'd people who notice us not;
But ah! like a charnel-blown poison, is wrought
With the roses of heavenly fancies, the thought
That eternity never may be!

But these wild meditations were hush'd by despair,
And the highest of hopes was o'erthrown;
Ah, man! thou hast many a burden to bear,
But black as the evils to which thou art heir,
The blight of Unfaith is alone.

But lo! at the edge of the woodland a gleam,
Where the leaves and the branches were riven,
Like a fragment of sky, or a glimpse of a stream,
Or a column that stands in the path of a beam,
Or a cloud that has fallen from heaven.

And, startled, I roused me; my breathing was stilled
By the birth of a sudden fear;
And I gazed on that aperture suddenly filled,
Where a moment before lay the pasturage, tilled,
'Neath the moon, unmistakably clear.

And I look'd for that opening ever, when lo!
I saw it wax plain as before;
And I saw the red furrowing, mantled in glow;
But moving upon me—I started! the flow
Of my veins for a moment was o'er.

The Vision drew onward; its silv'ryness
  Enluster'd the branches around;
And its footfalls were soundless, but startled me less
Than the tips of its pinions, which trail'd with its dress
  But displaced not a leaf on the ground.

And a cold oozing dew, which fell not from the leaves,
  Nor was brush'd from the grass by my hand,
Embeaded my brow; and the dying conceives
Of that moisture, more chill than the drips from the
    eaves
  When the snow-mantle melts from the land.

And pausing beside me, I look'd in the face
  Of the Form which had suddenly near'd:
And I knew that bright aspect! none other's the grace,
Which eternity's eons can never efface
  From my bosom, indelibly sear'd.

And my heart for a moment was stil'd in distress,
  Like a soul that its warning receives;
But she lookt in my features with tenderness,
And her starry-ray'd hair and her radiant dress
  Fell o'er me like shadows of leaves.

And bending full o'er me, her loveliness
  Inclined like a blossomy bow;
And a perfume like lilies was breath'd in my face,
As a snowy-white hand, like a moonbeam's caress,
  Strange-jewell'd, was placed on my brow.

That magical presence, that beauty so oft
  My repose from the world and its blights;
And those accents the same, but more heavenly soft!
As she whispered, "I WAIT THEE!" and pointed aloft
  To the empire of numberless lights.

And her lustre waxed dim, yet she fled not away;
  And the sward and the branches swam round:

And I motioned to clasp her, but frail was the clay
Round my spirit that darken'd as darkens the day,
And I sank like a clod to the ground.

PRELUDE.

That fadeless dream—it was too bright to be,
Too far beyond, a vain expectancy;
It came to me at moments like a beam
On dark and restless waves, that splendid dream.
It hover'd round, daybrooding and by night,
Awake, asleep, around me like a light,
A bright belief, too beautiful to be
This side the tomb—outside of phantasy.

THE GRAVEYARD WINDS.

The midnight winds were rocking
Young birds in their braided bed;
The herded stars were walking
Where the milky pathway led;
When I heard an old ghost talking
To a young shade, newly dead,
As the graveyard winds sang low,
Ethereally sweet

What were the phantoms saying,
The shadows of the dead,
When the midnight winds were swaying
The infant birds in bed,
When the stayless stars were straying
Where the milky path was spread,
As the graveyard winds sang low,
Ethereally sweet?

I heard the plaintive asking
And answering of the dead,

When the midnight birds were basking
In starbeams round their bed,
Save where thick leaves were masking
The fledglings yet unfled,
And the balmier winds sang round
Their unbetray'd retreat.

And I heard the younger crying,
That fair shade of the dead,
When the midnight winds were sighing
O'er many a silent bed;
And I thought—some lov'd one dying,
Some spirit all but sped;
And the graveyard winds sang low,
Compassionately sweet.

From a tomb's moonlit inscription
Some infant names I read;
Pathetic the description
Of those young flow'rets fled;
And I thought—What gloom Egyptian
Enshrouds the infant dead:
And the graveyard winds sang low,
Compassionately sweet.

Through thickets, dark recesses,
Where moonbeams none were shed,
New shades in snowy tresses
By guiding ghosts were led;
And wild their shadowy tresses
Upon the winds were spread:
The cemetery winds,
Unutterably sweet.

I watcht with breathing bated,
That fair young spirit, sped,
As by the tomb she waited
The loved one, yet unfled;

And I thought—Perchance were mated
The living and the dead;
And the homeless winds sang low,
Disconsolately sweet.

She was a ghost of beauty,
Nor seem'd she wholly dead;
And of her featur'd loveliness,
The bloom alone had fled;
(Continuing its duty
Upon some flow'ry bed,
That odors evening winds,
Unutterably sweet).

I saw her mild eyes gleaming,
Methought did softly weep;
And the paly flood was streaming
Where she did vigil keep;
When lo! athwart the beaming,
I saw an infant creep—
And the graveyard winds sang low,
Compassionately sweet.

METHINKS IT WAS A VISION PASS'D ME BY.

Methinks it was a vision passed me by,
A gliding dream and brightly garmented;
And but one instant gleamed her sylphan eye,
And but one moment on her cheek I fed,
Live vermeil-vapor'd evening, softly red,
And delicately flush'd in fleeting dye.
Methinks it *was* a vision, for a brightness
Went with her, and a breath of lilies blent
With every snowy rustle; and her lightness
Was as a wafted blossom as she went.
Ah! in no wakeful, vista'd memory,
But doth remain some twilight, softly red,
Some ardent hour, like haunting harmony,

Or tender tune—some vision fleeting by,
Some gliding dream, and brightly garmented.

SONNET TO HELEN.

Thy name is low as is the fallen leaf
In pathway slim'd, and thy white fame hath fled;
And to my heart unutterable grief
Has come, the dream, the radiance, the brief
Transcendent seeming passionless and dead,
Ah fatal chance! ah merciless event!
Oh! that I might have perisht never knowing
Thee but as thou didst seem; the ornament
Is shatter'd, the flower that yesterday was blowing
Hath wilted, and my soul is stricken through,
And passionate affection is in vain;
Yet thy strange spell and spirit's charm which drew
My helpless soul to thee would draw me once again.

MARGARITE.

Sweet Margarite! it is no transient spell
Thou weavest round, for in thy spirit lies
A meshing power beyond my words to tell;
Not wholly in the marvels of thine eyes,
Nor altogether in the quivering dies
That faintly vermeil, 'neath their lustre dwell.

As when a fragrant wafture, coming whence
We cannot tell, and tho' we strive to find
The essence rare, delicious to the sense,
(Some lowly weed perchance in verdure dense,
That gives unseen its treasure to the wind),
Seeking in vain the vale and many a knoll—
E'en so the source of that sweet, strange control—
Surpassing music—gifted eloquence—
Sweet Margarite! is hidden in thy soul.

October, 1904.

TO SWINBURNE.

Poet! I read thy verses but to weep,
  Thy music leaves me with a heavy heart
That one so gifted and renown'd should steep
  His gifts in vileness, degradate his art;
Whose images insidious to the mind
By phrase lascivious-subtile—and refin'd.

With bards of other days it could be so,
  Not justified art thou to tread their way,
Their pages wholesome howsoev'r they flow
  Obscenely, 'twas the custom of the day:
Thou art alone in thy harmonious dirt;
To Byron's honest coarseness how inert!

Beethoven, Schubert, Chopin, blest are ye!
  And all your brothers of the heavenly art;
No damning thought, no hideous imagery
  In your sweet language! poisoning the heart.
All purity within your fancies dwells,
Like azure streams and heaven-reflecting wells.

Poet, 'twere well that thou shouldst pause before
  Departing on the all-uncompass'd sea;
Thy thoughts are broadcast as on stream and shore
  The hectic leaves of Autumn! and to thee
It may have vasty import, and the lot
Of humankind that thou should heed this thought:

As when the gardener on mid-autumn day
  Raketh the dead leaves ever to a pile
And gives the torch, so unto thee I say,
  Perverted bard, that thou shouldst reconcile
Thy soul with Purity; quest far and nigh
Thy leprous driftings, heaping vast and high

And give the torch! so may thy spirit speed
  Unfearful o'er the vastness, gladly gliding;
So mayst thou say that thou hast done a deed,
Outblotting all; departing poet, heed!
  So thou may'st dwell where beauty is abiding.

Nantasket, Mass., June, 1906.

BYRON.

From all the illumining beings that old Earth
Hath usher'd into light and ta'en again
  Into her chambers
  Devoid of dreams,
  I turn to thee,
  Transcendent spirit!

I turn to thee in wonderment and joy,
And admiration and complacency,
  That I, even I,
  However remote,
  Am kin to thee,
  That thou wert human,
  Undying mind!

I think of thee, misunderstood in life,
And in this warmthless time, neglected now,
  So brilliantly endow'd,
  So generous hearted,
  Of transient day,
  And sorrow, wild and sweet,
  As creeping from thy page,
  Swells over me.

Thine is the charm like unto evening,
Like unto morning, and thou art akin
  To darkness,
  And flamy dawns;
  Matchless as morning!
  Somber as sunset!

Ah, in my youth how deathless was thy spell!
And in my memory lingers none like thee;
And brooding on thee, youth,
There wells within me
Silent regret.

CHATTERTON.

Strange mind that liveth in the wondrous tome
Of myriad libraries through learn-ed lands;
In cottages and castles, and art found
In palaces that move along the deep.
To massy mansions where magnificence
Dwells like the dawn, thou hast the entry now,
And shinest in the firmament of fame
The youngest wonder; and thy name is linkt
With deathless grief and passionate regret.
Alas! for what was daily thrown to dogs,
Thy matchless mind was blotted from the earth.
Thy name hath pass'd to the sweet range of sound,
A tone to waken sorrow: still a child,
Thou turndst from the heartless multitude
To seek thy one consoling friend—the grave.

KEATS.

Young master mind! that utter'd on life's last
Ebbtide strange newton'd haunting harmonies,
Then perish'd, like a sea flower fading fast,
Torn from the garden of its native seas:
Thy memory glows like star-abandoned beams,
(Of shattered planet, perish'd eons agone)
Not least among the splendors and the gleams
That steadfast be, and master tonal dreams
And deathless voices, speaking ever on.
What carest now for earth's belated fame?
Thou, marvelous youth! that maketh sages wonder.
And when the iris'd morn's or evening breeze

Lament around my path, they seem the same
Self sighs as thine, young master! and I ponder
Which wildwood strains are thine in bird-sung symphonies.

POE.

Even as a somber cloud at evening,
Half splendid in the sunset, was that mind.
As when we walk in moonlit cemetery
Wreathe-chisl'd stone pass by and lowly slab,
Pass by half heedlessly, to pause beside
Some towering tomb, so thus that giant genius.

TO THE SPIRIT OF CHOPIN.

With awe I hear the mighty masters speak,
As gods their voices, speaking for all time,
And in those tones the haughty soul is meek,
The harrass'd heart is lifted up to seek
In earthless regions solaces sublime!

Unequal'd master! I have lov'd thee long,
In infant years I knew thee and thou art
E'en as a comrade; dear to me thy song,
Thou speakest to a fast-augmenting throng
Of eager souls, and speakest to the heart.

If 'twas decreed that from the dead could wake
One gifted soul and I the pow'r possess'd,
What choice of sleeping genius would I make?
Ah thine, Chopin! would be the hand I'd take
And hail thee as the noblest and the best.

Thou speakest as none other spirits speak;
Of all the Masters, living and departed,
Thou art alone, unparallel'd, unique;
Thy voice rings truest, saddest and most meek,
As if the heart that sung, sung broken-hearted!

Alas, great spirit, thou art all unknown,
To earth's untutor'd millions but a din;
And most who heed—for pedantry alone,
And the great mass of men as deaf as stone
And live and die as thou hast never been!

IMPROMPTU TO BURNS.

Immortal Master! youthful and alone
Thou standest; and the century here
Yet find'st thy voice the voice of all humanity.
Thy many gifted brothers
Compel the minds of many or of few:
Speak to a sect or cult:
Thou hast for audience
The earth and all it hath of living men.

SHELLEY.

Transcendent soul! why is it that thou wert
Sent here so illy timed? oh, ages hence
Thy proper day! humanity inert
Dream'd not thy warmth, thy heartfelt eloquence,
'Til, like the instant lightning rushing on
From darkness unto darkness, thou wert gone!

STAR GAZING.

Poems to Thais.

Prelude.

That haunting charm, not in her accents sweet,
Nor in the soft enticement of her glance,
Nor heavy lustre tress, bright pleat on pleat,
Nor raiment rich, nor gliding elegance.
It was a trance, it was a reverie
Of fervent dreams, as when into the rose
The bee sinks silently, within her spell

My spirit languisht: as when melody
Show'rs on the ear and wild enchantment grows
And ardent wish. Thus dimly can I tell
That clinging charm, more strange than opiate rhapsody.

I SAW THEE GLANCING.

I saw thee glancing, and a sweet regard
Methought was in the momentary gleam
Of furtive lustre, like the passing beam
That flecks the pale repining captive, barred
From morning breezes and wing'd voices fleeing.
Ah, gentle lady! deep into my being
Thy loveliness hath pass'd, like the perfume
That saturates the bosom of the bee
That looks into the lily! and the home
Of sleepless speculation is my heart,
That hopes, despairs, exults alternately;
I am but one in myriads, for thou art
E'en as a lovely stream which glides along
Through concours'd fields, and draws a thousand eyes,
A thousand admirations from the throng,
And countless tender thoughts and secrets sighs.

TO THAIS.

When we shall meet there'll be no utter'd word,
Our eyes will speak and pressure of the hand;
Sweet, silent interchangings, long deferr'd,
Of rapture, which we only understand.
Ethereal being! lovely revelation!
Long, long ago I met thee—in romance,
Or far salon of masterly creation,
Or in some vision of nocturnal trance.
Sweet Thais! deem not this the ebullition
Of one demented; every fervent heart

Seeks a true comrade ever, and recognition
Of one so sought, if e'en a passing vision,
  Begets a wildness which will not depart
    For many a day.

Thais, I deem thee far above the throng;
  Rare beauty, genius, magnetism thine;
Sweet simulator! unto thee belong
  Unnumber'd hearts, and lowliest is mine.

TO THAIS.

There is a picture ever in my sight,
  Of passing phases; downcast meditation
And pale repose that haunts me day and night,
Solicitude, anxiety, affright,
  And still suspense and pacing perturbation.

There is an image ever in my gaze,
  Of changing moods; indifference is there
And cold regard; belittling hauteur stays
One chilly instant; whether be the phase
  Disdain, hate, love, hope, fear, 'tis ever fair,

Thais! thou art inseparably near,
  Forever in my vision; and I see
No form of utmost beauty, and I hear
  No sound surpassing sweet, but memory thee,

TO THAIS.

Sweet lady! I have lookt into thy face,
  And it is fair—beyond my words to tell;
Ingenuous with youth and gentle grace,
  Would I could see into thy soul as well!

For I have found (alas it should be so!)
  That cruelty and falseness lie conceal'd

Beneath sweet masks—and reason will not know
'Til burnt-out passion hath the truth reveal'd.
If it could be—if beauty and sincerity
Could be united! truth and loveliness;
And wild, unlistening passion, of a verity
Inflame not one, but mutually bless:
The interchange of soul sincerity—
If it could be.

If we could find, if we could only see
With outward charm a singleness of heart!
It cannot be, alas! it cannot be,
The beautiful and true are wide apart.
The spell, the fancied worth, wild fervency,
Mean misery.

If it could be, if we would never waken
To the wild truth, so piercing to the soul,
So late perceiv'd, that we were all mistaken,
And the dread bitterness, beyond control,
Pass lightly from us, dying utterly—
If it could be!

Dear Thais, looking on you this I thought:
Ambition, Intellect are written there
In that deep brow—duplicity hath not
Art's high attainments and the artist-air.

TO THAIS.

Oh I am very weary, I would fain
Lie down to rest; to be a denizen
Of some still world where pleasure and where pain
Know no extremes, nor dreadful passions reign—
To fall asleep and never wake again:

To be at rest and dwell with quietness;
And in a tranquil dream forever dwell;

And bid adieu to minor cadences;
And say farewell to heart annoyances,
  And to all earthly sorrows say farewell:

For I am heavy laden, and to me
  Hath fallen a burden mournfully depressing,
A crushing load, that thro' its mystery
Of coming and remaining none may see,
  A grievous weight beyond my tongue's expressing.

Hast thou a heart, sweet Thais? oh then hear!
  Hast thou a tender soul? Then I will plead,
And let my supplication reach thine ear,
And in the gloomy night when Thought and Fear
  Sit by thy sleepless couch, I pray thee, heed!

Release me, Thais! from my soul I urge;
  I am the helpless leaf and thou the stream;
And thro' thy power alone can I emerge
Or sink forever. Oh I am on the verge
  Of dreadful madness—would 'twas all a dream!

WHEN DAYS AND WEEKS AND MONTHS AND YEARS HAVE PASS'D.

When days and weeks and months and years have
    pass'd,
  When forward shadows have been cast behind;
When wild regard, that would forever last,
    Hath long declined;

When lips that smile, when sweet immeshing glances
  Awake responses, fervent for a day;
When husht regrets and undivin'd romances
    Have chill'd away;

Then Thais—when those usual passions perish,
  Of transient glow, of easy, griefless wane,

Then Thais will my bosom vainly cherish
What was in vain.

TO THAIS.

Delightful artiste! would I could reveal
To you my admiration; I would fain
Embrace you and impart the glow I feel
In fervent pressure; or, if I might kneel,
I would adore you! braving your disdain.

Is it a crime, mesmeric one, for me
To proffer lowliest homage? I behold you
Ethereal, bright, a loveliness to see
But ne'er attain, a being that will be
Unswerving as the purposes that mould you.

Thais, believe me, in your every part
You reign unrivall'd; far away, beyond,
Remote and unapproachable thou art—
Yet, yet the bright ideal of my heart
Long, long conceived—I see thee and despond.

THINKING OF THAIS.

What bleak saharas reach away from me!
As the world's barren plains the heart is wide
In sterile spaces; hath its desert sea
Of vanisht griefs—cold isles of memory,
Its stagnant pools where fitful dreams abide.

I have one happiness, to dream of thee,
I have one hope, but it is laid away
Deep in my soul where never eye may see
Or ear discern its vain temerity—
Its dim pulsations baffling decay!

The growing warmth, augmenting constancy,
  The sleepless thoughts that ne'er subside again,
The glance exchangings, the felicity
Of claspings sweet, entwining ardently.
  The all-in-all of each and parting then—

It is the same, it hath been and will be,
  And every life unfolds the saddening lore,
That all we sigh for, all we yearn to see,
But glimmering dreams that vanish fitfully,
  And every dream but one remorse the more.

Ah, Joy is very near to Misery,
  As in the hopeless dungeon may abide
Sunlight and sadness, mirth—insanity,
And rapt Despair sits by Felicity,
  And Happiness and Horror side by side.

THINE EYES GLANCED HATE.

Thine eyes glanced hate, and thro' my bosom swept
  A bitter chill; alas for me the hour
That on my solitary spirit crept
  Thy all-resistless, all-compelling power;
  I am thy slave, and servilely I cower;
I am cast down—full heavy is my heart,
  And in that glance what disillusions lower!
And from the long-abiding dream I part
That we are each for each, ideal as thou art!

To be belov'd by beauty, to possess
  The trust of some sweet spirit, and to gaze
Into true eyes of lustrous loveliness;
  To hear one voice whose richness ever stays
Upon the ear in golden cadences,
  A spirit blest and who we ever bless,
A consolation and a fervent theme,
  And in whose magic presence ills are less—

Fantastic fool! what wildness dost thou deem!
Whoever dreams of such is living in a dream.

And yet—and yet—oh cease! renounce forever
  The hope of mutual souls; naught here can stay;
The snowflake falleth in the fleeting river,
  There's bloom on Beauty's cheek but 'twill decay;
  Ambition fires the breast to fade away,
And great resolve, so warm the night before,
  Departeth in the dawning of the day!
And unanimity flees from the door
Of tied affinities, romance and passion o'er.

TO THAIS.

Thou wert to me as roses fresh and new,
  And from that evening that I sat entranc'd
By thy pale beauty on my spirit grew
A restlessness, a yearning deep and true
  And passionate, by sleepless nights enhanc'd.

Thais, looking in thy pallid face,
  I long'd to know thee, yearn'd to take thy hand
And whisper my heart's wishes, and to place
  My soul, my destiny at thy command.

It is the same! it is as I foretold:
  That passion perishes in its own pain,
That love declineth ere a moment old,
That warmest love is in a moment cold,
  That wild infatuation is in vain!

I would not do by thee as thou hast done;
  Is it a crime to love, to show regard?
Ah! he who loves is lov'd by every one
Save the belov'd, whose eyes are ever on
  New conquests and as ready to discard.

Yet time heals all; and passion is at best
A thankless gift; its fever I would shun
If in my power. Ah where is peace and rest
Save in the grave! The loveless are the blest:
I would not do by thee as thou hast done!

TO THAIS.

Over thy features lightly come and go
Gladness and grief, repose and animation,
Shadow and shine and gloom and utter woe
And exultation.

How lightly canst thou laugh! and to my ears
Thy gladness real; thine art will have it so;
Ah woman's smile is easy, and her tears
Of facile flow.

Those transient ills, those joys—forever brief!—
Pass lightly o'er thy spirit void of care;
Ah, may'st thou know but simulated grief
Nor real despair!

SONG TO THAIS.

If thou and I should meet
Ere many suns have set,
And casually greet
With smiles and glances sweet,
We would be happy yet!

If in our hearts could be
The glow we once possess'd,
That made me dream of thee,
That made thee think of me,
How then would we be blest!

When far away I go
Wilt thou regret thy course

Of scorn that chills me so;
Ah, then the old time glow
  May move thee to remorse.

Ah, yes if we should meet
  Ere wholly we forget,
And casually greet
With smiles and glances sweet
  We might be happy yet!

TO THAIS.

Gloating upon thy likeness I behold
  Beauty and strength, a combination rare
In thy frail sex; Byronic in thy mold,
  Of finer fiber and of gentler air.
  Sweet Thais! lovely Grecian! I will bare
My heart to thee—behold! 'tis wholly thine,
  And to my soul as spiritually fair
As when, like cluster'd stars, thy beauties shine
Full on bewildered souls—but none so lost as mine.

The hour approaches and one thought impels,
  I'll hie me hence to feast mine ear and eye:
Thy voice is sweet, and thro' my heart's lone cells
  Re-echoes ever, where 'twill never die.
  Thais, I love thee! would that thou wert nigh!
How warmly would I clasp thee! how caress!
  Ah wild imagining! for such as I
'Tis madness thus to dream, the happiness
Of seeing thee afar is all I'll e'er possess.

TO THE SPIRIT OF THE DAY.

Oh thou that hast the concentrated greed
  Of all the segrated porcine clan,
Whose every gulp makes myriad mortals bleed
  And helpless hearths the face of Famine scan.

I say to thee, the threat precedes the deed,
  And tho' thou hast the upright mould of man,
Most like the beast forever in the trough,
O'erspread the swill and snap thy fellows off

And fatten while ye may; the time is short
  Until thou shalt be shrieking 'neath the knife;
Yes! gorge thee yet in safety, and consort
  With suckling broods that look to thee for life,
And mankind cringing and manhood amort
  Thy certain safeguard 'til the day of strife:
For sages see afar a horrid pow'r
And Mercy weeps that Fate has nam'd the hour.

Gorge thou! who hath considered Famine keeping
  His deathwatch 'neath thy safe prosperity,
Who hath considered famished women weeping
  O'er dying infants, smiling merc'lessly.
I say to thee, when Anarchy is leaping,
  May thirsting vengeance thus consider thee!
And like the brute whose instinct lives in thee,
Glut thou in thy exultant gluttony!

What tongue can tell the floods of ceaseless tears,
  The vats of bloody sweat of humankind
Since earth was cursed with thee and thy compeers!
  The taintless fortune, won with killing grind,
The comfortable hearth, wrung from the years;
  They vanish like the blooms in autumn's wind.
The plagues combined could never equal thee,
Exhaustless source of widening misery.

The wolf, which feeds upon the perishing,
  The vulture, bolting putrid carrion,
The serpent, which will gorge a living thing,
  The cat, which every living thing must shun,
The dog returning to its vomiting,
  The maggot stench-engendered in the sun,

Are nauseous-vile, but wholesome unto thee,
Spirit of greed and grasping perfidy!

Mankind hath bended unto many kings,
  And Bonaparte and Caesar—Alexander,
Who, tho' at moments harsh, inflicting stings,
  Was each a glorious, masterful commander,
And well-belov'd, and time their praises sings,
  And for their day our destiny is grander
And men, full flattered owned their sov'reignty.
But faugh! to bend unto a thing like thee!

Full eagerly thou flauntest in the ken
  Of men thy generous millions! and endow
Mesht institutes that multitudes again
  Re-echo thy beneficence and vow
Thou art the most munificent of men,
  And voiceful beneficiaries bow
To thee, the soul of magnanimity—
To thee—the synonym of piety!

In every age some mighty task confronts
  Some mightier mind: whose is the unheard name,
Whose unknown form this moment, haply, mounts
  Slow upward into everlasting fame?
The watchful fates that keepeth men's accounts
  Behold the task in every age the same,
Mankind's emancipation; every hour
Has manhood more and more in mammon's pow'r.

Mammon! the meanest menace to mankind,
  Like an insidious tumor in its growth,
Sapping vitality of heart and mind,
  And the pale victim long delayeth, loath
To hazard his existence, but will find
  That he must suffer tenfold for the sloth
Timidity engenders, and the knife
Is the sole certainty of saving life.

Shall mankind, meant and fashion'd from the first
To be the peers of heavenly company,
Consort with serpents slimy and accurst,
And feebly bend to bestial tyranny?
Shall we, a wholesome people, nobly nurs'd,
And fear'd by despots, cringe in infamy?
Shall men or beasts rule o'er us! Know the truth
All monsters must be throttl'd in their youth!

THEIR SUN HATH SET.

Their sun hath set, the race of silent men,
They go like leaves before the sweeping gust;
Their sun hath set, to never rise again,
Their graves are lost in vale and gorge and glen,
Unnumbered, and we tread their nameless dust.

Departing people! to the silent past
Ye journey now, and to oblivion's sea;
And as your signal smoke fades on the blast,
And as your campfires, emberless at last,
And as your wild haunts vanish, vanish ye.

The eagle, emblem of unfettered races,
Is taking flight, and follows liberty;
He sees his dusky brothers' saddened faces
Departing from the long-memorial'd places,
In quest of haunts where yet they may be free.

Their sun hath set, the haughty race of men;
They go like leaves before the sweeping gust;
Their sun hath set, to never rise again;
Their graves will be in vale and gulch and glen,
Unnumbered, and we'll tread their signless dust!

June 28, 1904.

TO AN INDIAN GIRL.

To me there is no other maiden
In the universe of women
Who can match with thee, my wild one!
Lovelier than a radiant river
Where a rainbow is embosom'd;
And whenever be my musings
Daytime thought or dream nocturnal
Thou art ever like a picture
Hovering from a splendid canvas
Always central in the vision.
Ah! there is no other likeness
In the universe of beauty
Which can match with thine, my sweet one!
Thy soft eyes are like twin planets
Peeping from an autumn forest
Tinged in twilight and vermilion;
And their glances are more tender
Than the rainbow when it melteth;
And thy mouth's miraculous curvings
Hath one rival—'tis a phantom
Resident of streams and mirrors;
And thy laugh is like the breaking
Of the wave upon the shingles
Full of ripple and refreshment.
Like a melody that's sprinkled
From the branches in the morning
Is the sweetness of thine accents.
And thy breath is like a zephyr
That hath lately talkt with lilies.
No! there is no other maiden
In the universe of beauty
Who can match with thee, my wild one!
Nor would I exchange thee, dark one,
For the loveliest of Christians
Or the handsomest of heathens!

THE THREE TIDES.

When the tide of Age sets in,
  With its foam in the whit'ning head
And the pallid hand so thin;
And the passions, whate'er they have been,
  As the seaweeds, cold and dead;—
'Tis then—all observant—we borrow
  Sad thoughts from the sorrowful din
For existence, with every morrow
More frantic; we hark to that sorrow
  Then the tide of Age sets in.

When the tide of Thought sets in
  With its signs the unanimous clan
And unions united, akin
And aflame with the fervor to win,
  With one will, with one mind, as one man!
O ye in your luxuries lying
  On couches of pleasure and sin,
Hark to this: all injustice is dying,
And the winds will be swell'd with your sighing
  When the tide of Thought sets in.

When the tide of Blood sets in—
  But no! that will never be;
We'll fight, but no sanguinous sin
Shall stain us, however we win,
  However we strive to be free.
But Beauty! you smile too serenely,
And Hauteur! too high is your head.

Calm matron, so jewell'd and queenly,
Cold Magnate, whose millions so meanly
Are pilfer'd, like gems from the dead—
  Oh chasten your vulgar adorning,
And lull your extravagant din,
  And hold not the lowly to scorning

Nor torture too far! heed this warning
No sanguinous tide will set in.

THERE'S HATRED IN MY HEART.

There's hatred in my heart, and well there may,
When I look out upon the world and see
Vast tracts of want, augmenting every day,
And aching multitudes who cannot say
Aught is their own save moping misery.

There's hatred in my soul, a fiendish hate,
When I behold the glittering ones pass by,
Whose lot in life is golden, whose estate
Was built by mean and ignominious trait,
Sustained by beastly-tame supinity.

The vilest worms are not beneath the sod,
The loathsome serpent slumbers in the sun;
Ye heartless ones that helpless hearts have trod,
Ye sateless ones, ignoblest works of God,
Your evil destiny will yet be run!

I would I were a Titan for an hour,
And every gorging thing before me fled,
That bodied into one vast writhing pow'r,
Hissing its venom like a upas show'r,
How soon my heel would be upon its head!

WE BACKWARD LOOK.

We backward look, what doth appear?
Long days of toil and little cheer;
We forward glance and it is clear
The same must be
Until the day we disappear
From slavery.

From sun to sun it is the same,
A struggle to preserve the flame

Of life; the battle, ah how tame!
We but subsist
On despots' dregs, our end and aim
Is to exist.

Monotony! it is the curse
Of modern man, who must rehearse
One lifelong act if he would nurse
The vital breath;
Unceasing sameness! it is worse
Than many a death.

THE OUTBOUND SHIP.

It was a summer's afternoon
Down on the burning sands
I watcht a stately ship prepare
To pass to foreign lands.

Ah, damsel with the streaming eyes
That partest from thy swain,
Who knows, it may be better far
Ye'll never meet again.

Oh, lady, with the haughty glance
And cold, untender glare,
Perchance out yonder in the deep
Thou'lt weep in thy despair!

Great magnate with the steely eye,
Of avaricious shine,
The meanest fish that swims the deep
Perchance may on thee dine!

Frail youth, so hollow-cheekt and thin,
And eyes of deathly shine,
Thou deemst it far across the deep,
A longer journey thine.

My heart was sad that afternoon
As on the burning sands
I sat and watcht that stately ship
Depart for foreign lands.

TO MICHAEL AMBROSE MACNEIL.

Of Boston, Massachusetts.

Friend Mac: These be the days of greed,
And grasp, and glut of mammon,
When hard times harder times succeed,
And famine follows famine.

The wild dog on the prairie vast
Extinctionward is darting,
But human wolves are breeding fast,
And manhood is departing!

We have philanthropists indeed,
Bequests and donors plenty,
Who dole a million, and succeed
In safely filching twenty.

Oh not for their souls' sake they give,
For gorgers such as they
Are soulless, and each hour they live
Sees plenty melt away.

How blest this nation of the free,
With masters all around us!
How blest we sons of liberty,
When cold and hunger hound us!

My friend, what's needed most is thought,
And myriad-mouth'd expression;
If men had never utter'd aught,
We'd still have old appression.

Feb. 4, 1903. Written in the winter of the coal famine.

IN JOYFUL REALMS.

In joyful realms, remote from fancy's seeing,
  Where dies no flow'r and fades no aspiration,
Where beauty bides eternally unfleeing,
Where being clings forever unto being,
  Unwaking from the blest infatuation.

As when we meet here on this changing sphere,
  Our fancied comrade happy for a day,
Oh wildly fervent, for one hour sincere,
Safe for one moment from the sigh and tear—
  That joy in joyful realms for aye and aye.

As when we sink into the realms of sleep,
  From wearing griefs, augmenting sadness sever,
When lo! a face whose beauty bids us weep,
Unearthly sweet! we strive in vain to keep,
  Such lovely one will bide with us forever

In joyful realms. In deepest spirits dwells
  A sweet assurance, as a fragrance vernal,
That we shall roam in far and fadeless dells
With shining ones, where no remembrance tells
  Of aught of grief, but happiness eternal.

YONDER.

Uncharnel'd climes! untomb'd Eternity!
  Unmausoleum-mark'd, unmournful mounded;
Nor silent-citied, with sad cemetery
  Flower-piled by pallid hands and hearts death wounded.
Nor faded fields the soaring ever see,
  Nor blighted blooms, nor valleys autumn-bounded;
Nor falling leaf, nor trodden blossom view,
Nor sapless limb, nor lightning'd bough imbue
  With gloom exultant hearts un-sorrow-sounded.

Where ripply rivers glimmer, tear-unmingled,
  Where morning dews remembrance no tear,
Where ocean shores, sweet-murmurous, pearl shingled,
  And diamond-sanded, tinted gem'd and clear.
Where faroff vermeil vapors are outsingled
  By cherubim, and raced with echoing cheer;
Where silver plumes from fleeing seraphim
Descend like flakes; where eyes are never dim,
Nor brows belined, nor bosoms passion-tingled.

Where love abides, and pure affection rises
  From love that never wakens from its dream;
And eon to eon one soul another prizes
  More fond, to never stray from all they seem;
Where love condones, and sweetly compromises
  Misunderstanding winds that rough its stream.
Where souls shall find the one responding soul,
Predestined comrade, and as ages roll,
  The matchless charm remains—immortalizes.

For naught can die, nor impulse thought nor sound,
  Heart-well'd and sweet; the mortal spirit stunted,
Deficient, in eternity is found
  Full-forming, with a destiny confronted
Of glorious aim; and oh! the joy profound,
  The rapturous exclaims at tasks surmounted,
The exultation in the deathless years
For fond research; and with extatic peers,
  Drinks deep of springs of lore exhaustless-founted.

And none shall die, nor pass the anguish'd hour
  Which meditates inevitable doom,
Nor pathway thorn'd, nor serpent-hiding flower,
  Nor vernal vistas focus'd to the tomb;
Where midnight shines as morning, and the dower
  Of every spirit youth's unfading bloom,
Where haunting charms, faint dream'd in mortal sleep,

Are found like flowers; where sylphy visions keep
Insatiate tryst by never-fading bower.

WHEN DARKNESS COMES.

When darkness comes, and nighttime harmonies
  Of plaintive sighings wake the far and near,
Repining sounds, the echo and the breeze,
With pensive meaning, mournful cadences;
  And lights that glow and dim and disappear

Over the meadow, out upon the river,
  From bank to bank, like lighted ghosts they flee;
And I can see the darksome water quiver
Beneath those fitful gleams, inconstant ever,—
  And many a bubbly sound proclaims to me,

And shining scale, life's mournfulest ordaining,
  Life seeking life—dark, merciless decree;
Alas! that Death waits not the final waning
Throughout life's realms, his eager hand restraining
  'Til came decay and sere senility.

?

Inquire not now: all answerless will be
  For ages yet the question uppermost;
Oblivion cold, or bright eternity,
  To stay with Earth, or pass the shining host.

Inquire not now: for ages must remain
  Unanswer'd the sublime interrogation;
To brightly flee, and pass the sapphire plain,
  Or darkly sink to chill annihilation.

THAT DARKSOME RIVER.

That darksome river, breadthless and unsounded,
  Which laps forever the eternal space,

Which we must breast, by silent night surrounded,
Which we must brave, to stand at last confounded
Before unswerving Justice, face to face.

O who will venture on that soundless river
Without some buoyance? ever round us lying
Are dormant deeds which will forsake us never,
Which will sustain us and maintain us ever,
Above that struggle and that anxious sighing.

That darksome river—hearken O ye silent,
Departed ones! when we draw near the shore,
And rest us, weary, on some outer island,
O send us, gazing from your happy highland,
Some smiling sign that every sigh is o'er.

IN AFTER TIME.

In after time will there be branded ones,
In sombre souls must there be struggling then?
And will there be beneath those lessening suns
White faces flitting thro' the throngs of men,
As I now see wan visages that flee
With what misery.

In after time will there be joy and laughter,
Exultant leaping of the unharrass'd heart?
And will there be sweet music echoing after
The festival where now but woes upstart?
So fast our tears methinks there'll be no laughter
In centuries after.

And will there pass each other in the street
Estrang'd and cold bosoms once warm and true?
And where were smiles but frowning faces meet,
And where such love but blackness meet the view.
And will there then upstart the quenchless blaze
Of former days?

In after time what will the answer be
To life's unscruted problem? far within
The lightless future where, evolvingly,
Events abide, as all the past has been,
Dwell formless forces, terrible, untam'd,
Unknown, unnam'd.

And where will be the exalted of today,
The lowly and the nameless, you and I?
As tree and flower and fruit are swept away,
Not we alone, our memory will die!
As fades the smile, as perish falling tears
In far after years.

THAT DARKNESS WAITS US.

"That darkness waits us and annihilation,
That we must vanish even as a spark;
As from the flow'ret passes animation,
As melteth morning hues, our destination
Oblivion's realm, and starless cold and dark.

"That we must vanish as a bubble breaking,
As shadows cease, that pass to utter nought;
And as a ray its parent sun forsaking,
Melts in midspace, the faroff world unmaking,
So that high Hope an infant's dream, a thought."

So feebly speak whose dismal voices are
Of vacant import; for their souls are dead
To telepathic tidings from afar;
To them the stars as if they never were,
And darkness round, beneath and overhead.

The dark belief, the doubting and the crying
Will pass away and we shall learn to see
Into those realms where beauty is undying—
Far shining cities and the throng unsighing—
And as a child deem of eternity.

IN DAYS OF BRIGHTNESS.

And must I then be as a silent sod,
  And pass to nothing even as a thought
Unmemoried? a footmark that was trod
On stormy sands? Art thou forsaken, God,
  By thine own children listlessly forgot?

In days, of brightness when our mornings waken
  To buoyancy, and evenings come in gladness,
Art Thou not then, All Loving One, forsaken?
Who deems of Thee 'til anguish overtaken,
  And shadows loom of death and fearful sadness?

I would not sink and be a silent clod,
  And fade to nothing even as a dream.
I dwell not on decay, the wormy sod,
And not in sorrow only deem of God,
  But days of brightness and in bliss supreme.

IN COMING TIME.

In coming time what marvels will there be,
  What dormant wonders, wrapt in silent nought,
And many a soul-tormenting mystery,
  Inexplicable now and vainly sought,
Repose like flow'rs upon some stream sublime,
    In coming time.

What joy will ring thro' faroff scenery
  No words can tell nor dream, however sweet;
Like laughter from some rare festivity,
  Where griefless glances beaming faces meet,
As children's echoes when they race and climb,
    In coming time.

As when we see upon a gala day
  Replying smiles, contagious gladness beaming,

The smiles which now but momentary play,
  Bright fancies now but momentary teaming,
So all sustained, 'mid scenery sublime,
    In coming time.

ODE TO TWO YEARS.

The hands point upward, seeming one,
Thy race, Old Year, is all but run,
Thy final moment hath begun!
  Thy wings are spread,
Hush! 'tis thy passing bell—'tis done,
  The year is dead.

Thou wilt return no more—not here,
But haply in some happier sphere
Art biding now—thy swift career
  Speeds ever on,
To countless planets cold and drear
  Hast come and gone!

Hail infant year! but moments old,
What wilt thou bring? What wilt unfold?
What wonder new shall we behold
  Ere thy decay?
What evil ere thy knell be tolled
  Will pass away?

Thy parent, Babe, brought many a pleasure,
And by that power we cannot measure,
Will Evolution, at her leisure,
  Our souls uplift,
What strange, astounding, undreamed treasure
  Will be thy gift?

Of unborn years—desire intense
To pierce beyond. Omniscience

Alone can see—to mortal sense
No glimpse appears,
What marvels—what magnificence
Of unborn years!

Old year, farewell! moist eyes are drying,
Ten thousand eyes have seen thee dying,
Ten thousand ears have heard thee flying,
Thy passing bell
Hath hush'd ten thousand bosoms, sighing;
Dead year—farewell!

Thou hast departed—not alone
Thou, numbered year. As cold as stone
Somewhere some soul, perchance unknown,
Hath left its clay,
The very moment thou hadst flown
It soared away!

That moment o'er ten thousand earths
Of meaner or surpassing girths,
Did hover, and ten thousand hearths
Heard happier breaths
Or heavier hearts—ten thousand births,
Ten thousand deaths!

Hail infant year! and many a chime
Rings welcome wild. From lands sublime
That moment unto mortal clime
An angel fleeing
Accompanied to the bounds of time
Some spotless being—

That deathless spirit born with thee
That weeps or smiles where'er it be
Or harketh to the wild and free
And frenzied chimes,

Is heir to all Eternity
And happy climes.

Year after year like wave on wave
Comes rolling by;—tho' bright and brave
Our various dreams—the most we crave
Is pleasure's fill,
'Till—dread awakening—lo, the grave
Yawns dark and chill—

Yawns dark and dread that gloomy goal;—
Our final hour—we may control
Its terrors now; and when that scroll,
Our past, we read,
How soothing to the sinking soul
Some saintly deed!

WHEN COMES DECAY.

When comes decay, and thought and sentient dream
Wax fervorless, and ardent yearnings wane,
And bright expectancy and fervent theme;
Anf faroff fortune, foolish tho' it seem,
Becomes cold fancy, fatuous and vane;—

When seasons pass, how swiftly! when bright Spring
Means one more milestone to the gloomy goal;
When Summer only mournful meanings bring,
And Autumn days, so bleak and withering,
Speak only of departure to the soul,—

Then look thee starward, melancholy one,
And joyful walk thy darkening autumn way,
Nor glance thee into chill oblivion,
But gaze beyond the faintest shining sun
To that far home where never comes decay.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES.

MR. WILLIAM SHUMSKY.

William Shumsky is a young Jewish poet of Boston. He was born in Franklin, Mass., was educated in the public schools of Boston, and is now only 21 years of age. In 1905 Mr. Shumsky and myself made a tour of Europe and the Holy Lands, and it is to Mr. Shumsky's enthusiasm, indefatigable industry and gift in imparting his knowledge to others that I owe my acquaintance with the Hebrew language. His poetry is written entirely in the Jewish tongue as he composes only for the amusement of his own people.

MR. PRICE COTTLE.

Mr. Price Cottle was born in Los Angeles, Cal., about 34 years ago. In 1896 he came to Boston to accept a government position. His lingual gifts are extraordinary.

A DREAM.

(From the Hebrew.)

I clasped her gently, looking in her face
  Of seraph beauty—inexpressible
The warmth and purity of that embrace
And loving whisper—time will not efface
  In many a day the glow I cannot tell.

Alas! alas! that we can never meet
  In living life the image of our trance;
The rapturous presence and the gesture sweet,
The look which memory loveth to repeat,
  The many a day recurring countenance.

SONNET TO ESTHER.

(From the Hebrew.)

So bright was she her image cannot flee
  Into Oblivion, but in my heart
  It doth repose, inalienable part
Of all I am and all that I can be.
Like uninspired materiality
  The myriad face of beauty; if perchance,
  I bask brief moments in some lovely glance,
But transient dreams, and fade from memory.
  But thou, oh never dying spell! thy power
  Is still unchang'd as from that primal hour
Of comradeship, when happiness was o'er
  Apart from other. Like convergent beams
  That momentary meet, end either streams
On paths unknown, unmeeting evermore.

SONG TO ROSENA.

(From the Hebrew of Wm. Shumsky.)

Her cheek is like new-fallen snow,
  By rosy windows tinted;
Her locks would make a yellow heap,
  Like sovereigns newly minted.
And by the arrows of her eyes
  My bosom did surrender;
I saw, and sigh'd to be her slave,
  And all my life attend her.

Like one that's fetter'd hand and foot,
  Chain'd in a cell securely,
Is he who comes within her spell,
  Her charms will bind him, surely.
Her eyes with lustre overflow,
  Her voice is wondrous tender;

I heard, and sigh'd to be a slave
And all my life attend her.

Like nymphs that lave in lilied streams,
Her motions are entrancing,
Like music and like poetry,
Like Beauty lightly dancing;
One fervent dart, my soul was hers,
One accent, wondrous tender,
One smile, I sigh'd to be her slave
And all my life attend her.

SWEET MAIDEN OF THE BROWN EYE.

(From the Hebrew.)

Sweet maiden of the brown eye,
Of cheek like tinted dawn,
Like vapor pale and tinted,
Just ere the tint is gone;
But ah! the air that lingers there,
Like Welcome beckoning on.

Sweet maiden of the red lips,
More richly dyed than dawn
In bright midsummer morning
Before the dews are gone;
But ah! the pearls reposing there,
And priceless every one.

Sweet maiden of the dark hair,
More dusk than ere the dawn,
That well would match the sable wing
Which minstrels rhyme upon;
But ah! the ebon lustre there,
And gloss that's never gone.

Sweet maiden of the brown eye,
More tender than the dawn,

That glimmers down on waiting dews
  And dries the dampened stone;
But ah! their deep affection,
  And all for me alone.

SONNET.

(From the Esperanto of Price Cottle.)

SUSPICION.

Ah pale thou art, and there's a sombre sign
  Of anguish round thee, and unutter'd grief
Those depths of starry tenderness confine;
And on that brow—so alien unto thine
  Serenity, like jealousy's belief—
I see the sadness deepen line by line.
My spirit's comrade! smile once more on me,
  Laugh but one moment that I may depart
With smiles and dimples in my memory,
  With silvery intonations in my heart!
Unanswering thou! I did not deem thee thus;
  Methought that breast was kindliness alone,
  Impulsive but to pity and condone;—
Into my heart a desolate grief is creeping,
Thine own so still and cold and ominous;
Ah let me clasp thee wildly—thou art weeping!

SONNET.

(From the Esperanto of Price Cottle.)

THE RECONCILIATION.

I claspt her fervently, a fragile being,
  I kiss'd her as she lay my arms within,
And held her from me for insatiate seeing,
Her languid loveliness, so well agreeing
  With ardent dreams where she has ever been.

I claspt her tenderly, and near my heart
I heard her own, and on her snowy brow
Impress'd my lips. My soul! not now thou art
A slum'brous fantasy, nor fleeting now.
The shadows deepen and the twilight flowers
Incline in sleep; far on the lethean sea
The myriad multitudes, and happy hours
Fall now on many; sleep comes not to me,
Nor hath oblivion realm a sweeter dream than thee.

ON VACATION.

PRELUDE. OVER YONDER.

Across the river, following the path
Up the embankment, striking on the trail
Into the deep woods, where the sunlight hath
No entry, nor the boist'rous meadow gale:
On mossy pathways, thro' dark isles I'll wander,
Over yonder.

Behind the hill, along the intervale,
Up the red sandstone, by the icy spring,
My halfway rest, and striking on the trail
Into the deep wood where wild accents ring:
On mossy floors, in sylvan halls I'll ponder,
Over yonder.

TO DR. MAURICE E. PAINE FITZ GERALD, OF BOSTON, MASS.

Antigonish, N. S., Aug. 10, 1906.

Dear Doctor: Once again I sit
Me down in a poetic fit;
My glass is nigh, my pipe is lit,
I'll taste good cheer;
Yes, I will make the most of it
While I am here.

We're here today, we're gone tomorrow,
This hour we smile, the next we sorrow;
Art down in the mouth? drink rum or borrow
A phonograph;
Ere settling in the coffin narrow
No harm to laugh.

How recreative field and wood,
How soothing-sweet alone to brood
With nature when the troubl'd mood
Belines the brow;
The soul expands in solitude
The bards avow.

How pleasant is this country road,
Enticing even when o'erflow'd
With drifting dust: here comes a load
Of fragrant hay;
Hey there! you jolly jumping toad,
Get out the way!

How cool, to municipal glare,
These smokeless hills and valleys fair;
As blest a contrast, I declare,
As land to see.
After the dreadful mal de mer,
Ah, sacre! oui.

I'll rest me in this shady nook;
I didn't fetch, nor need a book,
Enough for me the running brook;—
And now egad,
At nature I will have a look—
This rum's not bad!

Here in this dell of mint I'll pass
A fragrant hour; how cool the grass;
What herb is this? my head, alas.
I ne'er could cram it

With nomenclature; by the mass
It's ragwort, damn it!—

The weed that makes the farmers swear,
The blight of Nova Scotia's fair
And fertile fields; upon the air
The seed is blown;
And wheresoe'er it lighteth, there
The pest is known.

Some forty years ago 'twas brought
From South America, and thought
All harmless; on the wharf, forgot,
By sailors thrown;
And now no roadside, field or plot
But it is known.

Thou dirty alien! poison plant,
If good for aught thou wouldst be scant;
Tenacious as the flea or ant,
Thou thrivest fast;
And all the rustic gossips grant
You're here to last.

But what's this weed to do with me?
Oh, nothing! like to let you see
I've studied some in botany;
And now b'gum,
I'll have another—here's to ye—
Hooray for rum!

Here's to my friends! may their regard
Be mine to foster, nor discard;
Malignant evils, pressing hard,
May we outlive 'em;
As for my foes, may hell reward—
But I forgive 'em!

Now Mrs. Wasp, go 'long with ye,
You're not in my society!
But here's your health! may you and me
Be here next June!
'Rah! 'rah! for Ireland! when she's free—
Not yet, but soon!

Hah! what was that? methinks did hear
A rustling movement very near
In that deep grass; a toad is there!
A look I'll take;
A lizard maybe; I declare
It is a snake!

Not one, but forty! ho, ho, ho,
It must be that a snakey show
Is going on;—but no—but no—
Oh Lord forgive!
The Devil's juice I will forego
As long's I live.

I'll put for home: 'Twas awful lichor,
Oh my poor head—I'm feeling sicker!
My blood is boiling—getting thicker!
'Twas fearful stuff!
Sneer if you will, and grin and snicker—
I've had enough.

The man who drinks and ne'er forsakes
His work, and health and comfort takes
From stimulent—he's wise who makes
Good use of it;
But when you see a grove of snakes
It's time to quit.

O drink! the evil of the day,
What plans thy flood hath swept away;

What youthful hosts have gone astray
  Returning never;
Ambition 'neath thy fatal sway
  Subsides forever.

For thee men drain the bitter dregs
Of death and madness; childhood begs
Wolf-ey'd, and age on palsi'd legs
  Becomes outcast;
Thou woe more widespread than the plagues
  Of all the past.

Not those alone who sink beneath
Thy boundless blight; ere shroud and wreath
For generations yet to breathe
  They form the fashion;
To unborn innocents bequeathe
  The fatal passion.

Dear Doctor, it is time to finish;
The hour is late, the lights diminish;
This stuff may all be Green or Finnish
  To you, alas!
(Hold on a shake 'till I replenish
  My empty glass).

I've eaten apples quite a lot,
Too green I fear; I never thought
Of consequences—something hot
  I'll have to take;
Ouch!—I must close—oh, oh, I've got
  The bellyache!

TO DR. EDWARD A. TRACEY, OF BOSTON, MASS.

Antigonish, N. S., Aug. 13, 1906.

Dear Doctor: I have hied away
To beautiful Acadia;

My pulse is good, my feelings gay,
  My head is level;
Ye cares that long had me at bay,
  Go to the devil!

Fresh air and sunshine, hail to ye!
Hail exercise! health giving three;
Hail to delightful scenery
  Far from the Hub;
Hail long sound sleep—so new to me—
  Hail good fresh grub!

Yes, Doctor, I could leave behind
Forever the unceasing grind,
The maddening, murdering, blighting blind
  Pursuit of mammon;
And live unfetter'd, unconfin'd
  As any gamin.

To roam the field and tramp the wood,
Untortur'd by the countless brood
Of bus'ness cares that sap the blood
  And sear the brain;
Unmixing with the multitude
  Whose god is Gain.

Yet, Doc., this is a narrow way
To look at life: From day to day
You toil and moil and get your pay
  E'en as you should;
Cut off a leg (or what you may)
  You're doing good.

We're here to work, but princip'ly
To help each other. I may be
Disgruntled at the drudgery,
  Complaining loud:

If I assist humanity
I should be proud.

Here, from this mountain top I see
What grandeur spreading out from me;
The woodland's crimson scenery
In sunset glow!
The river, intershiningly,
Winds far below.

The day begins to disappear,
The infant river gurgles near,
The swain is thinking of his dear,
And hikes to meet her;
The night, how beautifully clear,
And (damn that skeeter!)—

And night birds waken. Here and there
A firefly flecks the darkening air;
How pleasant to be free from care!
A bullfrog croaks
As stifling in his watery lair—
(I hope he chokes!)

How sweet the country when you've fled
From burning bricks and ceaseless tread
Of restless feet; The day is dead:
About my bunk
Sweet odors waft in from the mead—
Ugh! phew! that skunk!

I've steamed ten thousand miles of main,
Sailed up the Thames, sailed down the Seine;
I saw the spot where Lady Jane
Mislaid her head;
The spot where Raleigh, too, was slain
And Bolyn bled.

I've traveled weary leagues, I have!
Conversed with Latin, Celt and Slav;
I've studied many a noble knave;
  Saw Byron's tomb;
I marveled at Napoleon's grave,
  That man of gloom.

I've seen King Louis' bloody shirt,
Three centuries "unwashed, unhurt,"
Yet mirky with the gory squirt,
  Right plain to see;
A gruesome witness to inert,
  Malmonarchy.

I've traveled some—I've been around!
I saw the slab upon the ground
Where stood the guillotine—confound
  Its memory!
Where gentle, helpless women found
  Eternity.

Hell-hearted brutes! were't not enough
To drink the blood of sterner stuff?
However, we are not less rough—
  Take Gov'nor Bell
And "Teddy Rosenfelt" the gruff,
  Whose records tell

Unpitying barbarity
To erring femininity;
Evolving soul! I cannot see
  The sense or fitness
To vaunt advanced psychology
  As facts will witness.

But yet in justice to the plan
Of Darwin the events I scan
Occurred within too brief a span
  Of fleeting time;

The evolutionary man—
How vague his climb!

If we could vision, as a year,
Eonic cycles, 'twould be clear
The ethic transmutation here;
The change would be
As vernal day to winter drear;
And we would see

A picture of the brutal past
So ghastly we would be aghast,
And pray the horror not to last
One instant more;
But ruthful veils are wisely cast
Our eyes before.

Yes, I have traveled up and down
This planet, and have weary grown
Of living customs not my own;
Here I could stay
Amid these wafts of pure ozone
And while away

Eventless years. Our life is brief,
As frailly fastened as the leaf;
Death cometh as the nightly thief
We dread to scan;
We live, we die; these are the chief
Events of man.

Ye horrid thoughts—away! away!
Ye shall not spoil my holiday;
And brighter words than death to say;
How fresh this breeze,
Full-freighted from the meadow hay
And apple trees.

I pass o'er stream, thro' thymy dell;
How sweet to me the tinkling bell
Upon that cow; it is to tell
  Where stray the kine;
A happy scheme—exceeding well
  And superfine!

See t'other cow; she comes to see
What sort of creature I may be;
Co bossie! she appears to me
  Ayrshire—milk full;
Good heavens! I must climb a tree—
  It is the bull!

I fear no bull—outside the fence;
But he advances; his intents
May be of serious consequence:
  Skidoo for me;
Who argues with a bull repents—
  So 23!

I'll pike for it: I was an ass
This dirty field to ever pass;
I hear his hoofs upon the grass
  At thundering clip;
If I should sink in this morass!
  If I should trip!

I feel his snorting hot behind me;
This perspiration—it will blind me;
Another moment he will grind me
  With gory blows;
And in this swamp no man will find me—
  I'll feed the crows!

In studying natural scenery
A "soulful calm" is necess'ry;

No thymy dells occur to me,
  No thickets dense;
No prattling brooks—naught can I see
  Except the fence!

Alack! I'm done for; now I feel
My final moment: shall I squeal
Aloud for help? I stagger—reel—
  Amid these thorns;
And—Julius Caesar! sharp as steel
  I feel his horns!

And such is life: we watch the sky
In rosy reveries; the sigh
Is absent, and the moments fly—
  Oh yes! the bull—
I haven't space enough to die,
  The page is full.

I feel ai; I have the label
Of health upon me; and—no fable—
So hungry I clean off the table;
  The plates I lick;
I tell you I am getting able
  And very slick!

Dear Doc. forgive this rigmorole,
I did not mean, upon my soul,
To smother you with such a scroll
  Of witless talk;
(Have yet got in your winter's coal?)
  So long, dear Doc.!

DEPARTED DAYS.

(Song-Sonnet.)

Departed Days! ye glow unwonted sweet;
  The ardent hours, the long descending suns,

The sounds the echoes pensively repeat,
  Like dreamed replyings of departed ones;
The alder'd valley where the rivers meet,
  The lapp-ed banks, with blossoms waving gay,
The arbor'd homes which fancy must complete,
  The wistful hills, so green and far away!
Departed days! ye have not fled forever,
  Your mornings waken and your waters run,
Your echo'd chimes still float across the river,
  Your evening lamps are lighted one by one!
And round your hearths, when night hath darkly set,
Are ember-brightened faces, happy yet.

A RIVER DREAM.

I wander'd into Autumn's silent wood,
  Red carpeted, with interwoven gray
And yellow blends, a soundless solitude,
  And to a lonesome valley made my way.
And on a moss lawn by a bubbly stream
  I lay me, and the endless eddying held
My glances, 'til a Reverie and Dream
  Alighted near, but gently were repell'd.

* * * * *

She was but fleeting; and her trailing tress
  Her single raiment, in the setting sun
Of golden strands, as o'er the water-cress
  She wafted by me, that resplendent one!
And with the turning of the stream she went,—
Some sylvan sylph—or river-resident.

WINTER.

Season severe, and anesthetic time,
  Dissembling death the tree and shrub and flower;
When life's mysterious currents cannot climb
  The fibrous veins for many a frozen hour.

Even as a stream that fades into the sands,
  Continuing unseen, is dormant life;
And oft I wonder, 'mid the bleak woodlands,
  Where now the tides in summer branches rife.

Like to a fire that sweeps a monarch's halls
  And flame its greed infernal satiates,
Licking the priceless landscapes from the walls,
  And fabric dreams—so Winter desolates.

Remaining blooms and yet green avenues,
  Like to a city where a plague has pass'd,
Or as a banner'd fleet, with gallant crews,
  Left tempest wreckt, and naked every mast.

Yet, Winter, cheerless in the broad domain
  Of nature, thou hast many a happy hearth;
And spite thy bleak and desolating reign,
  Happiness still finds many a spot on earth.

There is a fever in the human breast
  That thirsts for every season ere its turn;
Sharp, whistling winds for blossoms bring a zest,
  And mid green glens for snowflakes do we yearn.

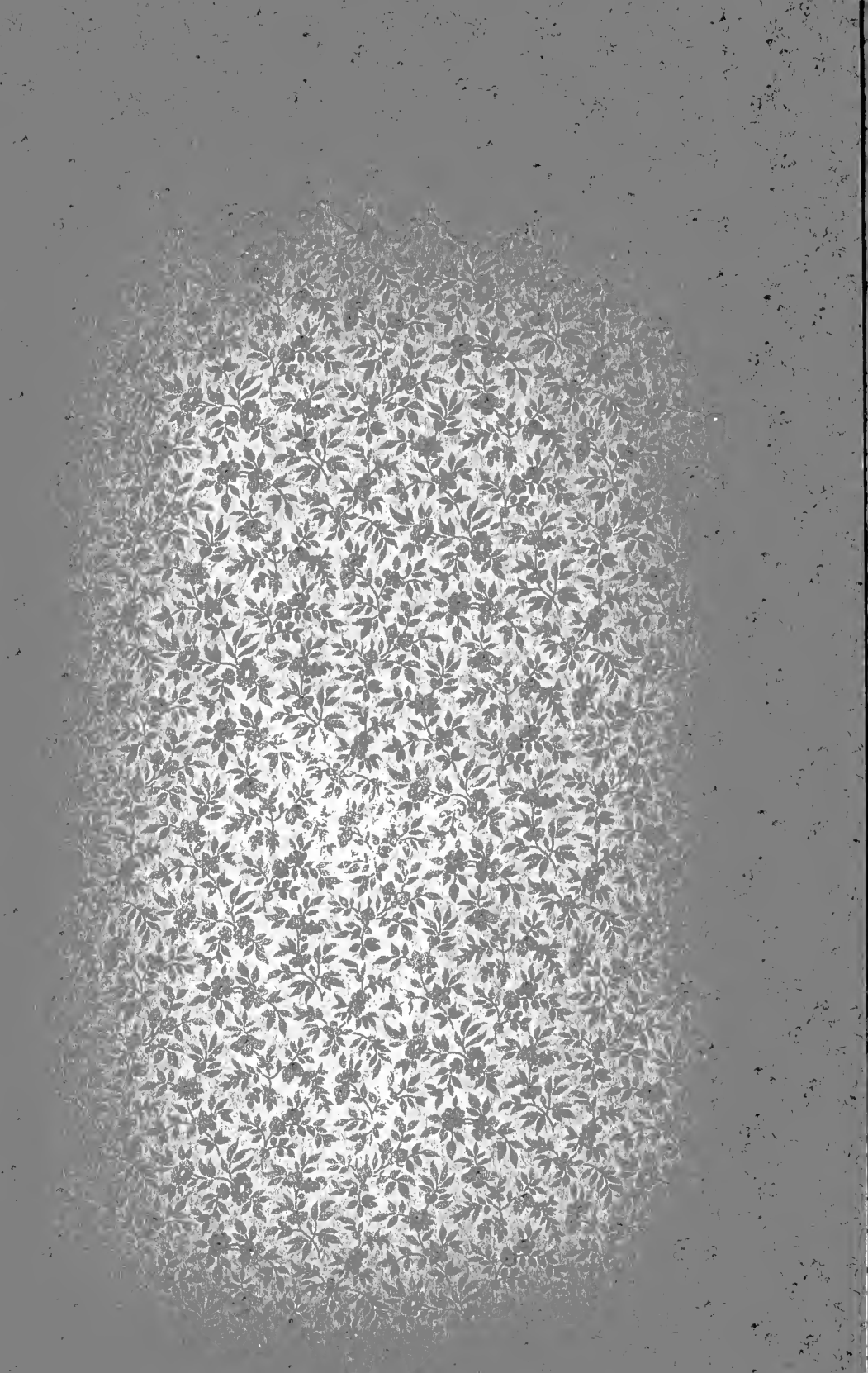
WHEN COMES REGRET.

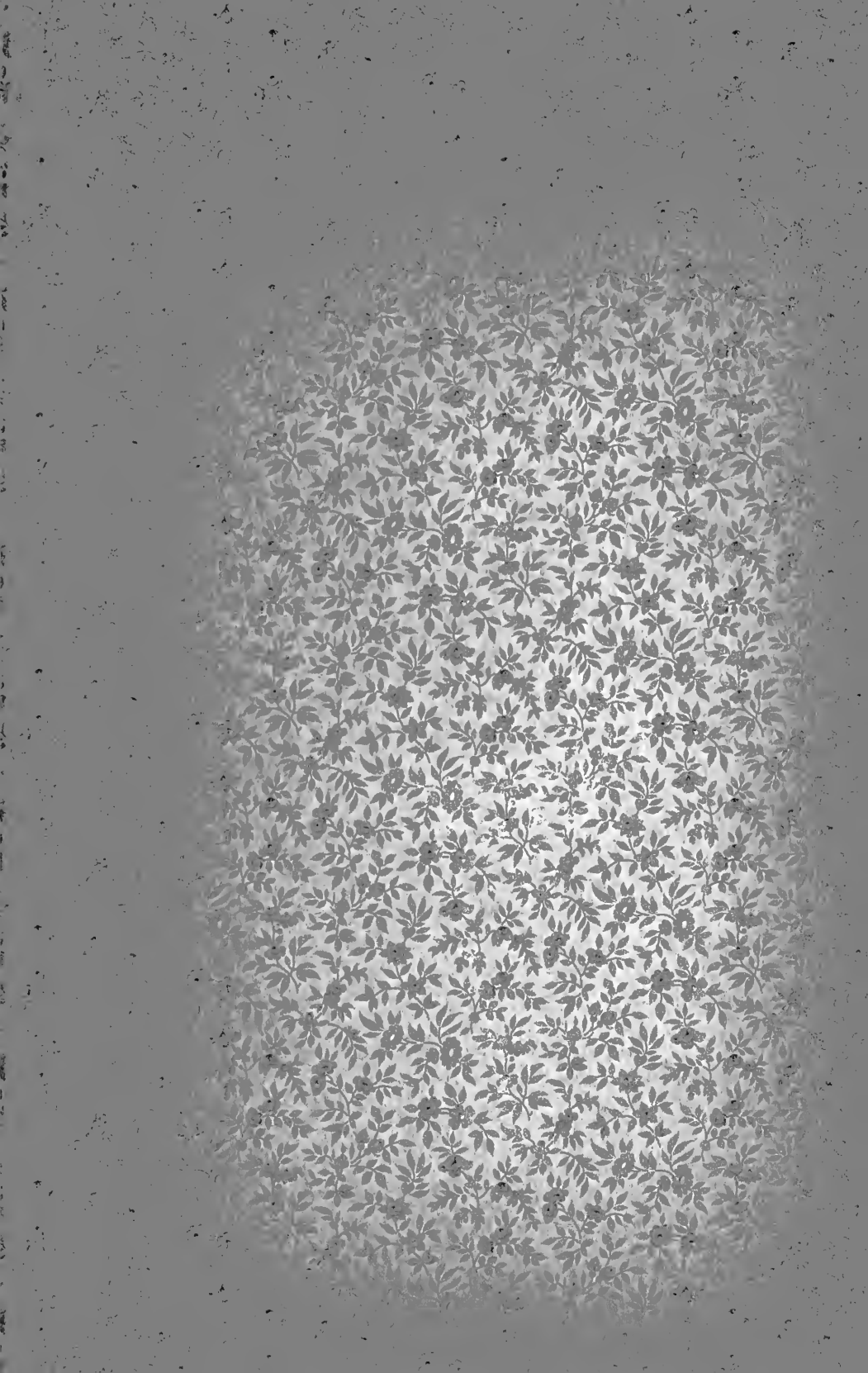
When comes Regret, unbidden guest of Thought,
  That formless spectre ever found behind
My chair of meditation, then hath not
Departed spirits that repining wrought
  By seeking converse with the living mind?
  That viewless shadow, traceless, undefined,
Of unaccounted source, pervades the breast;
  And as the sighing of the Autumn wind,
  Whose subtle meaning words may never find,
So comes Regret, Thought's uninvited guest.

TO MARY.

Thou wert to me as roses, rich and new,
  An alien odor wafted to the street
  From chapel censer; and unwonted sweet
Thy spirit, purer than the morning dew.
  Ah, when with thee how richly was I blest!
How golden were the moments, bright and free;
  And since those hours the dragging years attest
How priceless were one moment spent with thee.
  My sands are down, and passions' fires are flown,
Infatuation's fever hath declined;
  Yet sweet to me, as blossoms newly blown,
Is memory, with thy beauty intertwin'd!
  And like soul treasures, born of charity
  To man and bird and beast, are thoughts of thee.

MAY 24 1907





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